



Bangla Blockade: Sufferings all around

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Rain increases flood woes in the north

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Ready to help restore peace in Ukraine: Modi

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'Spirit of sacrifice' and 'genius' Yamal pave way for Spain

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Hasina, Xi pledge to boost strategic ties

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

China has promised to provide economic support to Bangladesh in the form of grants and three types of loans including interest-free ones.

The pledge came yesterday as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wrapped up her China visit, holding talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

China also offered Bangladesh one billion Yuan (about \$140 million) as economic assistance, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said at a press briefing in Beijing prior to Hasina's departure for Dhaka last night.

Beijing said it attaches utmost importance to its relationship with Dhaka and assured Bangladesh of continued support for its journey of development.

At the meeting with Hasina, Xi said China wants to invest more in Bangladesh and work with it on the international stage.

"China and Bangladesh will work together to establish global peace and prosperity," Hasan Mahmud said.

Xi brought up the Rohingya issue, the foreign minister said.

- » Bangladesh, China sign 22 instruments, make 7 announcements
- » China assures of grants, soft loans and commercial loans
- » Relations elevated to "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership"
- » China will provide highest cooperation in solving Rohingya crisis

"I know that you have sheltered millions of Rohingyas who were displaced from Myanmar. This is a burning issue for you. We will do our best to help you resolve it," Hasan Mahmud quoted Xi.

China will play an important role towards solving the Rohingya crisis by holding talks with the Myanmar government, and even with the Arakan army if necessary, he mentioned.

Technical committees from both the countries will sit together to decide how

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday, the last day of her tour of China. The two leaders discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest.

PHOTO: PID

QUOTAS IN GOVT JOBS

Protesters won't back down despite SC status quo

STAR REPORT

Amid the apex court order for a status quo on the issue of quotas in government jobs, students yesterday vowed to continue their protests against the quota system.

Around 12 noon, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court ordered the status quo for four weeks.

This means the recent High Court verdict that reinstated the quota system in government jobs will not be in force for a month, and the 2018 government circular abolishing the quotas will stand for the said period.

The protesting students, however, announced they will press on with their demonstrations until the government forms a commission to reform the quota system and the parliament passes a law to this effect.

Sargis Alam, an organiser of the anti-quota campaign, said, "We'll relent only if we get word from the highest executive position that the quota system will be reformed through a commission.

"We want the parliament to enact a law reforming the quotas," he told protesters at the Shahbagh intersection last evening.

Asif Mahmud, another organiser, announced that today's blockade will begin at 3:30pm.

"Students from universities and colleges across the country will block major intersections in Dhaka along with highways and railways adjacent to their areas."

After a day's break, the protesters yesterday resumed the "Bangla Blockade" around 10:30am, occupying key intersections, major highways and rail lines in Dhaka and other parts of the country.

Road and rail communications were snapped, leaving commuters in utter distress. The traffic in Dhaka stood still for long hours, while around 30 trains from the capital ran behind schedule.

'ENOUGH IS ENOUGH'

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, passed the status quo order following two separate petitions, filed by the government and two Dhaka University students, challenging the HC verdict.

The bench also includes Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, Justice Md Abu Zafar Siddique, Justice Md Shahinur Islam and

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Eight jailed for 7yrs over Ctg girder collapse

All staffers of construction firm; 13 people were killed in the 2012 incident



STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced eight employees of a construction firm to seven years in jail in a case filed over the collapse of Bahaddarhat Flyover girders that killed 13 people and injured 27 others.

The court of Chattogram Fourth Metropolitan Additional Sessions Judge, Shariful Alam Bhuiyan, delivered the verdict of the case lodged with Chandgaon Police Station in 2012.

The court in its observation said the horrible incident took place due to negligence of the construction company and its staffers.

The convicts are construction firm Mir Akhtar-

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QUESTION LEAK AT PSC

The malady runs deeper than feared

Names of some mid-rank officials come up in probe

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Some more current and former officials of the Public Service Commission are involved in leaking questions for government recruitment tests, police and intelligence officials said.

The Daily Star has details about the involvement of a top PSC official and a mid-ranking official in leaking questions, but it is withholding their names as it could not independently verify the information.

Sources said that the top official was served with a show cause notice at a government office over a corruption allegation. He was later transferred to the PSC.

At least two officials secured Bangladesh Civil Service jobs in collusion with the mid-ranking PSC official. One of them is the son-in-law of the mid-ranking PSC official. He had served as a sub-inspector of police before joining



the force as a BCS cadre, sources said.

"It's not possible for one or two people to leak exam questions. A group of people worked like a syndicate. We are hopeful of getting the details during the investigation," a top PSC official told The Daily Star requesting anonymity.

The group, involving PSC officials and employees, leaked at least 30 question papers of government recruitment tests, including BCS exams, over the last 12 years. This came to light after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police picked up 17 people, including five PSC officials and employees, from the capital on Sunday and Monday.

The arrests were made after CID got information that the questions for a railway recruitment exam held on July 5 were leaked. A case was filed with Paltan Police Station on Monday night accusing

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BUSINESS

Actual export, NPL data to be available now: BB governor

The actual data on exports and non-performing loans (NPLs) would be available from now onwards as the central bank emphasises releasing of actual figures, Bangladesh Bank governor said yesterday.

"The export data has been corrected. Now the release of accurate export figures will continue," Abdur Rouf Talukder said.

About NPLs, he said there was window dressing on the part of banks, which made attempts to hide the actual bad loans.

STORY ON B1



Students block the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday during a demonstration as part of their "Bangla Blockade" demanding reform of the quota system in government jobs. Students from different public universities and colleges have been staging protests across the country for the last 10 days to press home their demand.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Israeli strikes hit UN agency building in Gaza

29 killed at camp for displaced Palestinians in Khan Younis

AGENCIES

Israeli forces launched more deadly strikes across Gaza yesterday, according to medical sources and the military, which said it targeted Hamas members operating from inside a UN agency building.

The Israeli army also said it was reviewing an attack on Tuesday night in which hospital sources said at least 29 people were killed in a nearby school in the southern Khan Younis area – the fourth attack on a school building in four days.

Early yesterday, four people were killed and one critically wounded in the bombing of a house in the central town of Nuseirat, a hospital source said.

And two people were killed and six injured in another strike on a home in Bani Suhaila, near Khan Yunis, according to another hospital source.

Israel has stepped up air and ground attacks in Gaza City and southern Gaza since issuing evacuation orders for tens of thousands of people in the Palestinian territory.

The army yesterday dropped leaflets on Gaza City urging all residents to leave for safe zones.

The thousands of leaflets, addressed to "everyone in Gaza City", set out routes out of the city to the south and

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